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Supreme Court to Decide on Istook Anti-Porn Law

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Supreme Court announced today that they will decide the constitutionality of a law originally authored by Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) requiring pornography filters on federally-funded school and library computers used by children.

“I’m pleased that the Supreme Court has decided to hear the case,” said Istook, the principal author of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) which became law in December 2000, when Istook successfully attached it as a rider on an appropriations bill. **“The Supreme Court has historically recognized that Congress is justified in restricting how our taxpayer dollars are spent. This law only deals with restrictions on how tax dollars are used. It doesn’t censor anything, but it does refuse to subsidize pornography that’s aimed at kids.”**

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the American Library Association (ALA) filed suit against the law in March 2001 claiming that it would censor constitutionally-protected speech. In May 2002, a three-judge Philadelphia appellate court struck down the law. The U.S. Department of Justice appealed that decision in June.

“The challenge was filed by liberal activists, who chose a court where they expected liberal activist judges to side with them. But, as we always expected, it’s the U.S. Supreme Court that will rule on this law. I’m optimistic that they will uphold these common-sense restrictions on how kids use federally-funded Internet access,” said Istook.

Istook, formerly the chairman of the OKC Metropolitan Library Board, expressed concern that parents would keep their kids away from libraries if the ACLU prevailed: **“Parents want to send their kids to the library without fear of what is there. Many parents will limit their children’s use of the public libraries if they’re told that sexually-explicit websites will be freely accessible to kids. Common-sense tells us that few parents could stay with their kids constantly at the library, looking over their shoulders the entire time. Plenty of librarians know that children’s Internet access should be filtered. It’s sad that the ACLU and the liberal leadership of the ALA are more concerned with helping the pornographers than with helping our children.”**